Project I.D. No170

NAME: Takahashi, Taneno DATE OF BIRTH: 1891 PLACE OF BIRTH: Yamanashi
Age: 86 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: Continuation school

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1911 Age: 20 M.S. P.B. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Laundry business. 2. Restaurant 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. San Francisco 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Tanforan
Name of relocation center: Topaz, Utah
Dispensation of property: Left restaurant behind Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Laundry worker 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: Salt Lake

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: 1945
Address/es: 1. Richmond 2. _____
Occupation: 1. Daywork
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Husband died in camp.

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 1/23/77 Place: El Cerito
Translator Mabel Hall

Q: What is your name?

A: My name is Taneno Takahashi.

Q: What is your name?

A: My name is Yae Mori.

Q: Where were you born, Mrs. Takahashi?

A: I was born in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in 1891.

Q: How old are you now?

A: I am 85 year old. I grew up in the country as a spoilt child as I was the youngest. In those days they thought girls would become too smart if they had too much education, so when girls learned sewing, cooking and etiquette they were qualified to be married. My father thought if girls went to school they would lose modesty, so he wanted to take a good wife for his son, and let her teach his daughters sewing, cooking and manners at home. He took such a capable daughter-in-law, and let her teach his four daughters. As I was the youngest, I was the last to be trained. When my turn came, I had a marriage proposal from a man in Suwa Village. I had not had any training yet, so I said I was not ready to get married, but they told me that I did not need such training as I was going to live in America. When I was asked what I thought about the idea I said I did not want to be separated from my parents and go to America

My sister was living in America at that time. Her husband was one of the early Japanese pioneers who came to America. He came to America when people without money could not come to America. After working hard for 3 years he went back to Japan to take a wife, and married my sister. My brother-in-law, my husband-to-be and another man from Yamanashi Prefecture were operating Fujiyama Laundry as partners. As my husband-to-be was a serious ~~boy~~ young man, my brother-in-law wondered if he would make a good husband for me, so he told him about me, and we exchanged photographs. After seeing his photograph I siad I did not want to go to America, but my friends asked me why I didn't want to go to America when people who wanted to go to America could not go. I finally changed my mind and decided to come to America. Ours was a picture marriage.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 20 years old.

Q: Did you have 4 brothers and sisters?

A: I had 2 brothers and 4 sisters. I was the youngest.

Q: What was the occupation of your father?

A: He served about 3 years as a village master during the Sino-Japanese War. Whenever someone in the village received a draft call, he had to get up even during the night, and had to go to the village office with a lantern in his hand. Because of his merit, he was awarded the Seventh Order of Merit.

Q: Did he do any farming?

A: He was a farmer. As he had much land people called him the landlord. He took care of the village so much that his property became less and less, and by the end he had financial difficulty. As a village master he had to treat government officials.

The reason I did not have education was that my turn to get the training did not come as I was the youngest. Finally, when I started learning to sew and to cook, the marriage proposal came from Suwa Village. As I did not want to go to America I hid in my bedroom when the go-between came. He came everyday to ~~see~~ ask what my answer was.

Q: Was your father a strict person or a gentle person?

A: He was a very strict man. When people of the village went out at night and danced, I wanted to go out, too, but he did not let me. He told me that I should not go to such a place. At one time I went out secretly and danced, but my bother came and took me home. When we came home he scolded me and said, "If you want to go so badly, you can get out of here and go." He was that strict. If parents are too strict, the child would do things behind their backs or lie about things. As I had such experience I thought I should let my children do whatever they want to do after they are 16 years old . I brought my children up that way.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: My mother did not say anything. She did whatever he told her to do.

Q: Was she a gentle person?

A: Yes, she was.

Q: Whom did she obey?

A: My father. My father drank sake in a little sake cup every night at supper time, and mother served him sake without having her supper. When I saw mother do that, I wondered how she could serve him like that. As my father drank sake, and my mother had a hard time because of that, I did not want to marry a man who drank. When the marriage proposal came, the first thing I asked was, "Does he drink?" I heard that he smoked but did not drink. I decided to come to America even though I didn't want to, ~~but~~ because my sister was in America.

Q: How much schooling did you have?

A: In those days it was not strict at school. I did not like math. As I was not bright, I think I could not keep up with other children, so I played during the math class, and sometimes I did not go to school. I went ~~to~~ as far as the 6th grade, and then quit the school.

Q: How much schooling did your brothers have?

A: They went to school for about 4 years. Then they had a tutor come to our house and teach Chinese literature. He was a very strict teacher. When I peeped through the a sliding door, the teacher was teaching them with a whip in his hand. I thought I did not want to learn like that.

One of my brothers worked in the village office. He was not the village master, but he was a director. Our family was a big farming family, so we were busy at home. As there were many daughters in the family we raised silkworms, and produced abound 70 pounds of cocoons. We raised the most silkworms in the village.

When I went back to Japan 9 years ago, for the first time after 51 years, I found my house had not changed a bit. It is a big house with 3 storie. When we were raising silkworms we hired helpers.

That is why I did not have any education. When I was proposed, I said I was not qualified to get married as I had not had any education. They told me that since I was going to America I did not need any education. They just wanted me to go to America. I said I should learn some skill so that I would not have difficulties if I should be left alone. Then they told me that since he was the oldest son in the family he was to come back to Japan in 3 years, so I could learn a skill after we come back. I was married with a promise that we would reture to Japan in 3 years.

His mother told me in Japan that her son was very successful and sent money to Japan, and with that money they bought houses and land. When I came to America I found out that he was in debt, so I asked him, "Your mother told me that you were doing well, but didn't you earn the moeny you sent to Japan?" He answered, "Even in America money don't grow on trees. I worked hard to send money to Japan to let my parents live in comfort, but I am having a hard time." I was surprised to hear that, so I wrote a letter to my in-laws. I received an answer saying, "We write ~~u~~Su~~s~~ch letters because we are his parents, but you don't have to worry about such a thing." Since then I experienced hardships.

Q: How did you play when you were a child?

A: I played baseball.

Q: Did you play baseball at school?

A: No, after I came home from school.

Q: What else did you play? You were a tomboy, weren't you?

A: Yes, I was like a boy.

Q: Did you play with boys?

A: No, I just played with girls. There were boys who were in my class in the other village, but there were only 2 or 3 girls who were my classmates in our village.

Q: How old were you when you finished 6th grade?

A: I was 15 years old.

Q: What did you do after you graduated from grammar school until you got married?

A: I stayed home. As I liked to knit, I learned knitting from my sister, but when it became too hard I quit it and just played around until I was 16 years old. When my married sister came home with a baby, I carried the baby on my back and played outside.

Q: Didn't you work in the field?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: What kind of recollections do you have about your childhood?

A: I don't have any special recollection.

Q: What were the happy memories?

A: It was the time my sister and I went to Obon dance secretly looking like boys covering our heards with towels and danced among men. When we came home, we sneaked in the house from the back door. We were very naughty. It was not easy not to get noticed by our parents, but we did nothing bad.

Q: Did your mother noticed you?

A: Maybe she saw us, but she didn't say anything.

Q: About how many people were hired at your house? Did you have maids?

A: No, there was one man hired to help the field. As there were many girls in the family, we did not hire a maid so that the girls could learn the housework.

Q: Did your mother teach you the housework?

A: Yes, she did.

Q: Were you ever scolded by your ~~father~~ mother?

A: No, never.

Q: Just by your father?

A: Yes. As my father worked in the village office, we did what we wanted to do while he was not home. When father came home for lunch we behaved ourselves.

Q: Did you sit by the entrance and bowed when he came home?

A: Yes, we bowed and said, "Okaerinasai" when he came home, and "Itte irasshai" when he left. When we went to bed we said "Good night, father" and "Good night, mother", and when we got up in the morning we said, "Good morning, father" and "Good morning, mother."

Q: Were your parents religious people?

A: They were Buddhists.

Q: Did they belong to the Shinshu sect?

A: I don't know but they chanted "Namuami Dabutsu". There was a family alter in which they enshrined Emperor Jimmu and other gods.

Q: Was there a Buddhist alter, also?

A: There was a huge Buddhist alter in which were mortuary tablets. We burned incense and offered tea at the alter every morning.

Q: Did you decid to get married, finally?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Did you see his photograph?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What kind of man did you think he was when you see his photograph?

A: He seemed to be a fine man. He was kind of heavy set and looked like a broad-minded man, so I thought he would be all right.

Q: How many years age difference was there?

A: He was 27 years old, and I was 20. My mother-in-law said to me, "Taneno, a marriage with 7 years difference between husband and wife is very hard to find."

Q: Was his family a well-to-do family, also?

A: Yes, it was a well-to-do family in the village.

Q: Was he from the same village?

A: No, he was from the neighboring village.

Q: What was your maiden name?

A: It was Ogiwara.

Q: Didn't your husband go back to Japan to take you to America?

A: No, we decided to get married just by looking at photographs.

Q: Where did you get on board a ship?

A: From Yokohama.

Q: Did you have physical examinations?

A: Yes, I had a thorough physical examination. My parents picked a lucky day for me to leave. A girl from the same village as my husband was coming to America as a bride, so we came together as travelling companions.

Q: Did you stay at a hotel in Yokohama?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: How many days did you stay in the hotel?

A: Only one night. My travelling companion named Miss Uchida came with me on the same ship. She was a good friend, but she has already passed away.

Q: Did you feel lonely when you left your village?

A: It was very hard for me to part with my father and mother. I still did not want to leave, but I was told that I had to go as things were already arranged. My father gave me all kinds of medicine to take when I could not sleep at night, and told me to take good care of myself. I did not take those medicine.

Q: Who saw you off?

A: My father and my in-laws and a friend from Tokyo saw me off.

Q: How was it on board the ship?

A: Chinese cooks cooked rice in big dirty pots and served ~~rice~~ it with side dish on it so I could not eat it. I did not eat it, and waited till 10 O'clock when they sold Japanese sushi for 10¢ a piece. I bought and ate them. I watched people eat food like pigs, but when we arrived in America everybody except myself was detained at the Immigration office. I was the only one who could land right away. Most people were detained there for a week or two.

Q: Did the voyage take about two weeks?

A: It took 17 days.

Q: Did you get bored on board the ship?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: What did you do on board the ship?

A: I played "tag" and other games with my friend.

Q: Weren't you 20 years old then?

A: Yes, I was. I was still a child, wasn't I.

Q: Were there many brides on the ship?

A: Yes, there were. They were all picture brides, so when the ship arrived in America they all had their husbands' photographs, and some said, "My husband is not there", and some said, "My husband is there. That is the one."

Q: Did you talk with other picture brides?

A: Yes, we talked with each other. I did not correspond with my husband. I just came because people around me told me to come, so I did not have anything to talk about my husband.

Q: What else do you remember?

A: One woman on board the ship was friendly with the crew of the ship, so other passengers used to say, "As a picture bride it is not good to be friendly with the crew."

Q: There might be such a person among many women.

A: There was only one such person. Others were all quiet women.

Q: About how many picture brides were there?

A: There were 7 ot 8 of us.

Q: Were other passengers men?

A: Yes, but there were not too many men. As I was seasick I stayed on the deck most of the time. If I went inside, the smell of the ship made me sick, so I stayed out on the deck and ran around in the sea breeze for 17 days. For food I waited till they sold sushi at night.

Q: Did you eat just that?

A: Yes, just that, so when we arrived here I was the only one who landed.

Q: Did they have roundworms?

A: I think so. They were detained at the Immigration office.

Q: Did your husband meet you at the port?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: Could you recognize him right away?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: How did you feel when you saw him?

A: I thought this was the man I have to live with for the rest of my life. I came to America in Kimono, so my sister had my husband bring me a dress to wear. As he did not learn how to put on a corselet, he put it on me inside out. It hurt so much that on the way home I asked him,"Do I have to wear such an uncomfortable thing everyday?" He answered, "Yes, you do." I told him that it hurts, so he told me to ask my sister when we get home. As soon as I got

home I told my sister that my stomack hurt. She took a look and said, "He had the corselet on inside out. No wonder it hurt you so much." That is one of my recollections.

Q: Did you arrive in San Francisco and stayed at Angel Island for two nights?

A: He met me at Angel Island, and from there we went straight to Fujiyama Laundry.

Q: Where did you change clothes?

A: We went to Rev. Terazawa's and he performed a marriage ceremony for us. Then we went to my sister's.

Q: Did you change clothes there?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What was your first impression of America?

A: I thought I shouldn't have come here.

Q: Why did you?

A: He told me that I didn't have to work the first week or so, but I was bored having nothing to do. After about a week I started working in the factory. I had to put heavy 9-pound ron on a pot belly stove to heat them. If they got too hot I put them in the water to cool them. My hands were so tired that I could not open

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my fingers in the moring. I went to my sister crying and said, "My hands hurt, so I don't think I can take this any more." My sister scolded me saying, "Get hold of yourself. You will be laughed at." When I said, "I want to go home", she said, "What are you talking about. If you say you want to go home after you came all the way to America, our parents would not accept you." I was so sad that my tears stopped running. I wanted to die then, but when I thought I had a husband, and he was not a bad husband I did not have a reason why I should go home.

I had a relation whom I liked in Japan, and I had a lingering affection towards him, so I wondered if I should go home. When I told Mr. Nakamura who was taking care of the laundry that I wanted to go back to Japan because I didn't like the kind of life in America, he said to me, "You should not say such a thing. Mr. Ogiwara is happy with you. I will take care of everything, so you leave it up to me." My husband was young, and did not show his affection towards me. When I told Mr. Nakamura that, he told me that he would tell my husband to change his attitude towards me. I heard that my husband told Mr. Nakamura, "She is wrong. I did not mean to treat her badly. I think she is spoilt. Since she came all the way to Japan, I would love her. I have no complaint."

Q: Why did you think that way? Was it because the work was hard?

A: The work was hard, and my husband was unaffectionate. He was a quiet man and did not laugh when people told jokes. He was a good man, but he was not affectionate, so I did not like him. That is

why I wanted to go back to Japan. Mr. Nakamura said to me, "If you are married once, you cannot expect to have a good marriage again. If you are prepared for it, you can go back to Japan." When he told me that I gave up the idea of going back to Japan.

My husband was baptized, and he wanted me to be baptized, but I told him that I was a Buddhist, and I would never change my faith. A year after my baby was born, I killed the baby by gas.

Q: How did that happen?

A: A gas pipe from a stove was running by the bed. That day after I warmed up the milk and gave it to the baby I turned off the gas, but I did not turn off the main valve. Around 3 O'clock I went to the kitchen to fix some refreshment for my husband as the baby was asleep. After I served refreshment to my husband, and I had some myself, I took some to the baby on a dish. When I opened the door and called, "Morio!" I found the baby suffocated, and the gas was leaking. I picked him up, and he was still warm, so I rushed him to my husband and told him what had happened. Everybody gathered around and poured water on him, but he stopped breathing. There was a hospital near-by, so maybe we should have taken him there, but I guess that was his destiny. I think when the baby was playing with the pipe after he woke up, the pipe came aprt. I killed the baby because of my carelessness.

Q: Was that your first baby?

A: Yes, he was. If he was alive he would have been 52 years old.

Q: Was the baby born soon after you came here?

A: I did not have a baby for 3 years because I wanted to go back to Japan. The first baby died like that. The second one is in Los Angeles now.

Q: Around what time did you get up when you first came here?

A: Six O'clock.

Q: Did you work all day?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What time did you quit working in the evening?

A: I worked 11 hours a day, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with an hour off for lunch. at noon.

Q: What about supper?

A: We all had supper together.

Q: After you got through working?

A: There was a cook.

Q: About how many poeple worked in the laundry?

A: When I went there, my husband, Mr. Takei and my sister's husband were working as partners. A little later they organized a corporation with 12 employees. Then those single men took wives, and there were 12 wives, but they got along well. Looking back, I wonder how we got along so well without any complaint or quarrels. Of course we ironed everyday and did not have time to get together and gossip about others.

Q; What did you do after supper?

A: Sometimes we had to work overtime. When we didn't work overtime, we took care of children at home. I don't know what the people without children did.

Q: Where did you wash your clothes?

A: We put our laundry in bags and put our names on them, and had them washed and ironed.

Q: How many years did that kind of life continue?

A: About 8 years. A year or two later my husband went to Japan. As his mother was ill, he took the daughter with him to show her to his mother so that she might get well. However, his mother passed away while he was on board the ship on his way to Japan. After he went to Japan he wrote me and told me that he went into an suto-mobile rental business with partners. As it was a promising business he said he would come back to pick me up in a year, and I would be a wife of an automobile company manager. After about 2 years he came back from Japan. Not long after he came back he went off his head. I think a big stock holder monopolized the stocks, and did not share profits with other stock holders. He lost all the money he invested, so he came back to America. He was in good spirit when he came home. One day he went out to visit his good friend Mr. Ina. He did not come home till night time, so I called Mr. In's and was told that he had left his house for amother friend's.

I got the phome nuber of ~~this~~ that friend's house and called him, but was told that he had come, but had left. I looked all over the town but could not find him. A day or two passed but he did not come home, so I reported to the police. I was then told that a man answering my description was found dead at the Lakeside . I was shocked, and wanted to see him, but I was told that the body had been taken to the undertaker's, and I could not see him. I came home and wondered why such thing happened not long after he came back. I think he was confused by many unfortunate happenings such as the death of his mother, father and the baby.

Q: Did he take a child with him?

A: Yes, he took his daughter with him.

Q: Did he come back alone?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: Did he leave the daughter in Japan?

A: Yes, he left her there.

Q: How old was she?

A: About 2 years old. He took her with him saying that his mother would be happy to see her grandchild. I thought he was bring her back with him, but he left her there as his family told him to leave her there. That daughter was abused by her uncle's wife, and when she was 18 years old she was married and came back to America. She has 5 children now.

Q: Were you sad when your daughter didn't come back?

A: I was sad and lonesome.

Q: Were you waiting for her?

A: Yes, I was. I was lonely because he did not bring the daughter home.

Q: What happened after you found out that your husband had died?

A: I went to the undertaker and made arrangement for the funeral. I told the people of Fujiyama Laundry, and they took care of me. As he was a member of the church, Rev. Kodaira officiated at the funeral.

Q: Was that your husband who was found dead?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 28 years old. We were together for about 4 years, but he passed away without knowing the love between husband and wife.

Q: You had only one child?

A: I had two children, but I killed my son, so I had only one daughter left from my previous marriage. I have 3 daughters by ~~present~~ my second marriage.

Q: Did you remarry?

A: Yes, I did. I became a widow when I was 28 years old. I was not going to remarry, but people around me persuaded me to get married

so much that I decided to remarry. When my husband died, I wrote a letter to my father telling him that I wanted to go beck to Japan. He wrote and told me that it would not be fair to my late husband to go back to Japan then, so I should wait a year before I went back to Japan. I was going to wait a year, and then go back to Japan. After my husband died I quit the laundry and was living in the dormitory of the Independent Church. I found out that a distant relation of mine was here, so we started associating with each other. She had a restuarant on 7th Street, and wanted me to help the restaurant. I said I did not want to work as a waitress, but she said she wanted me to work as a cashier, so I decided to work as a cashier there. She had an apartment, so I stayed there and worked as a cashier at the restaurant.

Takahashi was working as a waiter at the restaurant, and we got to know each other. His relation told me to marry him as he is from a fine family. I didn't know what to do, so I wrote to my father and asked. He wrote back and told me that it was up to me to remarry. As people around me were so persistant that I decided to remarry. That is how we were married. He was from Hiroshima, and I am from Yamanashi.

Q: How old was he then?

A: He was 40 years old. Until he was married he led a dissipated life, so he was penniless when he was married. He said he would start saving money if he get married. That is why I decided to marry him. A year after we were married I had a baby, so we

could not save money. We were poor all the time. We wandered around, working sometimes in farms and sometimes in restaurants. As I had children I could not work, so my husband had to work alone. In those days his salary was $30 a month. We rent a big house for $30 a month, and let 2 students stay for $15 a month each without food. As I am soft-hearted I gave him coffee and toast in the morning. The house was on the 6th Street across from the midwife's office. My husband worked in a restaurant for $30 a month, and I kept the house and received $30 for rooms. We lived on that. Sometimes we were so poor that we did not have money to buy milk for the children.

Q: Did Mr. Takahashi quit going to restaurants after he was married?

A: He became serious and did not go to such places any more, and worked hard. I was fortunate with husbands, and both of them loved me. but they died early. Takahashi died in the camp.

Q: What were you doing during the Depression?

A: I was working in a restaurant then.

Q: Did you have difficulties then?

A: In those days there were 15¢ meals. We served 3 hot cakes with 2 eggs for 15¢ at the restaurant. When the war broke out we were put in Tanforan Assembly Center.

Q: Were you hard-up for money during the Depression?

A: We were in restaurant business, so we gave free meals to people who did not have money.

Q: Did you start the restaurant business?

A: Yes, and we continued it till the war broke out.

Q: How many children did you have?

A: I had one child then.

Q: How many children did you and Mr. Takahashi have?

A: Three, children.

Q: Were they all boys?

A: The first one was a boy, the second one was a girl, and the third one was a boy.

Q: Were they born while you were in restaurant business?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Was it a big restaurant?

A: No, it was a small one. As the restaurant was in a poor neighborhood, people with dirty clothes came to eat, but we managed the business with the spirit of serving people. In the meantime our children grew older, and when I was limping with sore feet they let me rest and they waited at the table for me after school.

Q: What did you do at the restaurant?

A: I worked as a waitress. We hired two cooks and a dishwasher, and I worked mainly as a cashier and my husband worked as a waiter.

Q: Do you have recollections of the days you had the restaurant? Was it interesting? Do you make much money?

A: We didn't make any money.

Q: Did you make enough money to make a living?

A: Yes, we thought it would be sufficient if we could bring up the children. We didn't have much profit, but we did not lose money. I went to the market nearby and bought inexpensive but fresh food so our customers liked our food. As our food was inexpensive our restaurant was very popular.

Q: About how many tables were there?

A: There were 5 tables with 4 chairs each, and about 5 people could sit at the counter. It was a small restaurant.

Q: You still had two cooks?

A: Yes, we had two cooks. All the money we made went into their wages, and we didn't get any wages. We just had enough to make a living.

Q: Did you remarry when you were 28, and your husband was 40?

A: My husband was 38 years old then. He was 10 years older than I.

Q: Was Mr. Takahashi a good man?

A: He was a good man.

Q: What was the name of your first husband?

A: It was Ogiwara.

Q: Weren't you surprised when Mr. Ogiwara died?

A: Yes, I was shocked. He left home saying he was going to visit his friend, but he did not come home.

Q: How many days after he came back from Japan was it?

A: It was two days after he came back. He had a younger brother in San Francisco, so he went to see him.

Q: Did he take much money to Japan with him?

A: No, he didn't.

Q: Where did he get the money to start a car rental business?

A: He got the money from his home in Japan.

Q: Did he spent all the money?

A: He did not ask me to send him any money.

Q: Did you get money from the laundry company?

A: I did not get much money.

Q: Didn't you own stocks of the laundry?

A: Yes, we did, but I left the laundry on my will and lived in the dormitory of a church. Mr. Amino who had a laundry asked me to help him, so I went there and helped iron clothes.

Q: Did you make your own living after your husband died?

A: Yes, I did. I was the chief ironer in the laundry, and was paid $60. In those days no other women was paid $60. Mr. Amino was not married then. I knew his family in Japan, so we did not have any questionable relationship, but people gossiped about us so much that I did not want to stay there, and I quit the laundry. Then I worked in a white family. I did the housework for $20 a month with room and board.

Q: Was it a white family?

A: Yes, it was. They were too fussy about cooking, so I quit the job. I tried not to become a topic of gossip, so I quit associating with people who gossiped about others.

T: Probably the laundry owner liked you.

A: I don't know about that. He didn't say such a thing.

Q: You didn't like him?

A: I never talked with him.

Q: Did the restaurant business go smoothly?

A: Yes. A man named Mr. Inouye who was our friend was going back to Japan, He asked us if we wanted to buy his restaurant as he was going to sell it to us cheap. My husband asked me if I wnated to get into business, so I ansered, "Let's try". We bought the restaurant on 7th Street. for $300 from him. When we told him that we didn't have the money, he told me to pay in installment. The business was good, and we had almost paid off the debt and was going to be on our own when the war broke out.

Q: Were you surprised when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I was very surprised, and worried what would become of the business. As it would not help by worrying, I believed God would ~~would~~ do what was best for us if we prayed to Him. I left it up to God.

When I was young I said I would never believe in Christianity, but God saved me. After I lost my child and then my husband, I was lost. Reverend Okubo was my pastor, but he did not know me as I did not go to church. He passed away before I became a Christian, but his widow used to come to Fujiyama Laundry every day and say to me, "You must be lonesome. Come to church, and you will be comforted while you are singing hymns." She took me to church, and since then I started going to church because I was lonely. As I kept on going to church and listen to sermons I thought Christianity was not bad. When I wrote and told my father about Christianity, he wrote back and told me that he had no objection as to whatever religion I believed in. I was relieved, and was baptized in 1917.

Q: That was not too long after your husband died, wasn't it?

A: Yes, not too long after he died. My second husband had gone to church once in a while, but he had not made up his mind to be baptized. When I asked him what he thought about the church, he asnwered, "It is good." So I asked him if he was ready to be baptized, and he said he would. That is how he was baptized. We were both baptized. We experienced hardships. Then the war broke out.

Q: What did you do with your restaurant when the war broke out?

A: We had to evacuate by a certain day, but nobody wanted to buy the restaurant, so we left it behind. Afterwards we received about $1,000 as compensation.

When our oldest son was 6 years old one of our friends asked me to work in the country. I said I cannot do farm work but I would go if I do just cooking. They told me just cooking is fine, so I went there. But when I went there I found out that I had to cook, and also had to work in the field. They asked me to work in the field instead of cooking because it is easier than cooking ~~because~~ and I didn't have to carry heavy pots. I thought it may be so, so I took my 6 year-old son and pulled weeds in the field. It took me half a day to pull weeds around asparagus in one line. At lunch time they asked me how many lines of weeds I pulled, so I answered I pulled only one line. They said they could not make any money if I was so slow. I told them I could not do any better, so I wanted to quit, but they asked me to try again in the afternoon. I worked hard, but I could pull only one lines of weed in the afternoon. As I was crying while I was pulling weeds, my son asked me, "Do you have a tommy ache, Mama?" I had a hard time.

Q: When was that?

A: It was before the war.

Q: Was it before you started the restaurant?

A: Yes, it was before we opened the restaurant.

After I quit the job my husband saw an add in a paper wanting some help at a laundry in Santa Rosa. He asked me if I wanted to go there, so I said let's try as it is hard to cook. When we went to apply for the jobs we were told that 3 or 4 employees would come back from Japan in about two months, so we would lose our jobs then, but if that would be all right with us. After two months they came back, so the employer said, "I am sorry to let you go after you worked so hard for us, but they came back, so please find another job."

We left there and went to Oakland where Mr. Yamada, a man from Yamanashi Prefecture had a laundry. He asked me to work as an ironer at his laundry. My husband found a job at a restaurant. Then our 6 or 7 year-old child came down with diphtheria and had to be isolated, so I rented a room and stayed there and could not go out or work. As we moved around so much we did not have any money. On top of that the child became ill, so we had a hard time.

Q: What happened after that?

A: If we were hired by others we had to leave when we were told to leave, so we decided to open a restaurant of our own. We borrowed money and bought a restaurant from a friend. When our debts were almost paid off, the war broke out. We had continuous struggle with poverty.

Q: Did you leave the restaurant without selling it?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: Which assembly center did you go to?

A: Tanforan. From Tanforan we went to Utah.

Q: Which camp in Utah did you go to?

A: Topaz.

Q: What kind of a place was Tanforan?

A: They made rooms out of stables and made us sleep there, so it had the odor of horse manue. It was a terrible place. We could not stay indoors, so my husband and I jogged around the race track in the morning and in the evening. When women whom my husband used to know in San Francisco watched us, my husband said, "She was my girl friend."

I experienced hardships, but I think I could tide over them because I was saved by my religion. I always believed that God would do His will. I left everything to God. That was my treasure.

Q: How was food at Tanforan?

A: Food at Tanforan was not good.We stood in a line with plates to receive food.

Q: How was the life in Utah?

A: I worked in a laundry for $16 a month. It was just enough money to buy things at the canteen.

Q: Did your husband die in the camp?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: What did he die of?

A: He died from cancer in his lung. At one time he spit blood, so I told him to see a doctor at once. The doctor in the camp could not tell what it was, so he told my husband to go to Salt Lake City and see a doctor. When he went to a doctor in Salt Lake City he was told that he had cancer of lung. In the camp they thought he had tuberculosis, so he was isolated. He came back from Salt Lake City saying that he was told he did not have contagious disease, so he had to take care of himself at home. As we lived in the camp, I could not fix anything special for him to eat.

Q: Did he know then that he had the cancer?

A: Yes, he did. As I had time, I took good care of him staying with him all the time, so I do not have anything to regret. When he changed the room he told me that there is no bed for me, so have a bed put in for me. I told him not to worry, I could sleep on a chair. He used to smoke a lot, so I told him to quit smoking. He said he stopped drinking, but he could not stop smoking. I think that was the cause of the lung cancer.

Q: How old were you when he died?

A: I was 51. Someone told me that there is a good man in San Francisco and asked me if I would like to meet him. I refused saying I was not going to marry any more.

Q: How old were your children when you went to the camp?

A: Out two sons were in the service, so we had just one daughter with us in the camp. She used to go to the dinning room or bath room and did not come home for a long time. When I scolded her for not coming home till late at night, she would say, "I was washing Mrs. Shibata's back in the bath. That is why I was late." Mrs. Shibata died in the camp, and in her will she wanted our daughter or Miss Kaku in San Francisco as her son's wife. I said my daughter was not qualified to become a pastor's wife. Moreover, the pastor's wife has to go through difficulties, so I did not want my only daughter to become a pastor's wife. As they insited so much I let my daughter marry him.

Q: Did you have any trouble in the camp?

A: The life in camp was not as bad as some people say it was.

Q: Did you go to any classes?

A: I learned caligraphy, and a little bit of flower arrangement.

Q: When did you leave the camp to come back?

A: After the camp was closed in 1945, I went to Salt Lake as our oldest son was married and was living there. I stayed with his wife for awhile. Then her parents went back to Berkeley and called me. I lived in a housing in Richmond for a while.

Q: Did you work after you came back?

A: No, I was looking for a job, but I did not find a suitable job. My son was working, but I wasn't.

Q: Didn't you work at all after you came back?

A: Of couse I worked.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: I worked in a family as it was the best job for me. I did not have to pay the rent or food, and I could get some money. I worked in a rich family and recieved $170 a month. Then my son asked me to live with him as he rented a house, so I came here. I lived with him and worked half a day doing domestic work in a family. I cried when I cleaned the bathroom.